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Commission work, like most work of an educational nature, has its discouraging side. To organize a new library in a good, new building, and then return after a season during which it has been administered by an inefficient or careless librarian, or one too old to take any degree of interest in the work aside from that of a booklover, is one of these discouraging features. To see a board of trustees spend every available penny in the construction of a building designed for ornament rather than utility, and leave not a cent for books or for salaries, is another. These cases, fortunately, are the exception. More often we find that the appreciative librarian of the small library has put forth every effort to carry out the plans advised by the commission, and that she and her board are all working for the best interests of the community. When the commission visitor arrives the librarian usually has a list of questions ready. She has a little extra money for books and, wishing to use it wisely, wants a list of the best ones to buy. Possibly she has some new books which she has been unable to classify correctly—will the visitor help her? What about a certain new novel—is it the thing for her library? Shall she buy second-hand books, and where? Many old public documents and pamphlets have been allowed to accumulate—which are worth keeping and which shall she discard? These, and dozens of other questions, many of them involving a "Please tell that

to my board," are asked. Worries and difficulties are brought up and talked over and sometimes the commission worker acts as peacemaker between neighboring library boards when it comes to a question of extension work.

Through correspondence also many problems are solved. It may be that a new assistant is needed, perhaps a new librarian. The commission keeps a file of names of those who are available in the profession and can tell who would best fit into this or that position. Many and varied are the questions which come with each day's mail: Hours of opening the library; the city treasurer wants a salary; who wrote a certain book? What shall we do about tubercular borrowers? About fumigation of books? Our board president will not tell us what funds are available—what can we do with him? Shall we accept certain gifts? What charge shall be made in the case of out of town pupils who wish to use the library? These are samples of the queries which come from all over the state.

One librarian recently expressed her opinion by saying that "The commission is the real backbone of the work for small libraries of the state." These are the things that make the commission worker feel that efforts have not all been in vain and that there is a very definite work for the Public Library Commission to perform in helping the small library serve its patrons more effectively and thoroughly.

LIBRARY COMMISSIONS AND THE HIGH SCHOOL OR RURAL SCHOOL LIBRARY

BY ELIZABETH B. WALES, *Secretary, Missouri Library Commission*

Since it has been decreed that I am not to have the pleasure of sitting with you in counsel, I shall discourse in a letter upon the subject assigned me rather than in a more formal way.

As the matter now stands, the problem of the high schools and the rural schools in the management of their libraries is governed by two factors—the knowledge of what is best in the organization and de-

velopment of a library, and the money with which to produce results. The first of these desiderata should be found in the principal or teacher of the school, the second (in the providence of the taxpayer), is in the hands of the school board or committee. At present no high school management denies the necessity of a library. Indeed, one meets with the most bristling affirmative if one questions the existence

of a library as a school equipment. It may be old, dusty, shelf-worn, but it is there, "so many" volumes for you to note in your list of accessories. The need of the school librarian is not yet recognized in the same proportion; that is coming.

The question of helping on the happy day when every high school shall have a well-organized library of well-chosen books, administered by a well-trained librarian, who shall live to give, and shall graduate real library lovers to become forthwith ardent patrons and supporters of public library, college library and special library—the question of thus helping on, I say, is one which is capable of many solutions. Going back over the record of the years, I find that our state forces show little difference in their desire to make school libraries profitable investments. The terms of their existence have brought the public libraries an especially energetic development in the art of choosing books and coaxing readers. The schools, in later years advancing into the regions of research, have encountered similar problems, but having a more definite hold on their constituency, have proceeded along less persuasive lines. With the establishment of state library central agencies, the appeal of both of these classes of libraries was apparent. One of them, having behind it the mandatory power of the state bureaus of education, had already some standards of support and limitation. It is not strange therefore that the public library, afloat, as it were, without a pilot, was the first care of the library commissions. It is probably true that the traveling libraries, seeking out the corners of the states where folks managed to eke out an existence without books, were the origin of the interest taken by library commissions in school libraries. All the states report the lending of traveling collections—sometimes debates, sometimes supplementary school-books and sometimes general books for community use—to rural schools.

In the League Handbook of 1907, three states especially reported work with school libraries under their library commissions.

At this time Nebraska reported no law requiring the purchase of library books for school districts, but the commission of its own initiative distributed a list of 500 books suitable for purchase.

During the next three years Minnesota developed a far-reaching system of aid for school libraries, which in 1911 was taken over into the Department of Education; this constituted a division of libraries which for some years worked successfully with the schools. The 1919 session of the Minnesota legislature passed a bill which consolidated the department of education and the library commission in one department, but so arranged the transfer of activities that practically no jar was given the operation of the commission office.

What is the record in other states? According to the 1916 yearbook (which being "befo' de wah" may have been superseded as an authority) ten states reported active connection with school library work outside of the usual lines of traveling library loans. This yearbook made special request for statistical information concerning the work with schools and very few states ignored it. It is of interest to note the lines of development in the states included in these ten (I group them according to a certain similarity of work):

Oregon—complete supervision since 1906; compiles list from which books must be purchased, and rules for care of libraries; New Jersey—complete supervision since 1915; has compiled school library laws, and published list for book purchase; Utah—list from which books are purchased made by the library secretary and approved by the superintendent of education. (These three have been able to accomplish much that would be interesting to tell if I were not pledged to brevity.)

Connecticut—visits school libraries but not systematically, and will furnish instruction on request; Massachusetts—sends a trained instructor to teach pupils in the schools the use of books and library equipment, and has tried a plan of having an advisory librarian for a county; Michigan—has served its county normal schools by instructional courses. (In this group the effort is all toward the training of those who are to use the library, in the expectation of thus making improvement permanent.)

Indiana—will organize school libraries when desired, and has organized as many as ten in one year (presumably there has been no withdrawal from the field of the institute which was so well begun in 1907, for late reports indicate a large number of schools participating in these local library meetings); Missouri—likewise has organized school libraries, confining such work to high schools, and on request only; while publishing only a few special lists, the commission has helped school library organization by supplying class numbers for the superintendent's recommended list; Kentucky—publishes a list for book purchase and is making special effort to get in touch with the school libraries.

Minnesota—because of the aforesaid developments is now in a class by itself; so also is California—under its county library system this state has a school-library organizer to assist in "articulating," as it were, the school libraries with the county library. New York—has, of course, its separate division of school libraries under the Department of Education.

To what conclusion would the study of these facts lead us? Nothing in the evidence seems to point to a fixed and rigid rule for the placement of school library supervision, as it has been done with varying degrees of success and continuity in library divisions of school departments, and in school divisions of library commissions. Mr. Watson, of the New York State Library, has said in this connection, "Unless a most cordial relationship exists between the commission and the department of education, there would seem to be great danger of friction." In studying the records and make-up of the various commissions, I find no reason to believe that such cordiality might not exist, for ten of them had as one of their members the state superintendent of schools, in 1907, and the two exceptions, Maryland and Washington, certainly have shown no localization. In 1916, five more have organized with the same representation of the educational department, and of these, three operate directly under the state board of education: Tennessee, Texas and Utah; again you will notice no tendency to localize. Miss Baldwin expresses her opinion that the supervision of school libraries, which had been dropped two years ago by the educational

department, will now be resumed, since the commission and school work have been consolidated. (Then the educational department in this case must have grown weary of well-doing.)

One of the objections to the commission management is that the librarian trained for public library work seldom understands the teacher or the school conditions. Miss Richardson of the Geneseo Normal School goes so far as to say that "the school librarian must first of all be a good teacher," and I have heard a very lively discussion of the same point among school men in Missouri, when the claim was made that they would rather have a good teacher who did not have library training than a trained librarian who did not know how to teach or have any experience therein. Of course, this is only saying in another way that the librarian must understand the problems of his constituency. Miss Templeton of Nebraska feels that if the library commission has not definite authority granted under the law to bring school libraries up to standard and keep them there the work will be irregular, some profiting thereby, and some refusing. The Missouri experience of thoroughly organizing one year to find "all that sort of thing" relegated to the "closet under the stairs" by a new principal another year, is a very discouraging one. Miss Martha Wilson finds that the state educational department has over the schools an excellent "whip" which is also much needed, and advocates that all state aid be conditioned on observance of proper organization rules.

Summing up the balances, Miss Wilson finds nearly as much in favor of the one method as the other. Under the school control, one has an understanding of school methods, authority which produces undivided allegiance, and coöperation which minimizes friction; on the other hand there is danger of poor equipment being supplied and lack of appreciation of library detail, the possibility of the work being put into hands untrained in library technique and library service, whereas the

commissions give assurance of good equipment, clear system, and trained supervision. She feels very keenly that there is danger to the public libraries in being placed under the supervision of the educational department.

From this point on the discussion is in your hands; I shall only add a few words more. It seems reasonable to say that for library work of any kind we need trained library workers, and it is probably a healthy sign of growth that every year brings a need for expert librarians in some special line. The balance for best library standards in school libraries dips to the side of the library commissions; for the authority to enforce them it dips to the side of the legal head of the school, the state superintendent. An equally satisfactory adjustment of these two items may possibly be made officially or unofficially. School librarians and teachers are nowadays encouraging all they can the use of

public libraries; they are trying to teach books and the use of libraries as they formerly taught writing and drawing and geography; but an older generation of school teachers have cast suspicion into the library camps, and it is not always that we meet these advances with the responsiveness they deserve. Let us boldly say, "No ancient feuds in the library family" and accept the olive branch of these earnest workers. Let no librarian cast the eye of suspicion upon a school library because it was organized by someone from the educational department.

Whether at this session you will decide for or against the library commission as the source of school library organizing, I know not, but I feel sure that you will be in favor of a real and separate section for the school library work under either supervision, and my last word shall be that you keep on keeping on with the education of the school board and the library board, the teacher and the taught.

HOW THE ARMY LIBRARIES HAVE HELPED OUR FIGHTING MEN*

BY FREDERICK P. KEPPEL, *Third Assistant Secretary of War*

With this particular matter of the war work of the Association I happen to have had something to do before most of you who are members. The war was about two weeks old, so far as our participation in it was concerned, when I went to breakfast at the Cosmos Club in Washington one morning and saw there Dr. Herbert Putnam. His eye was unusually bright, and I suppose you all know how Mr. Putnam looks and acts when he is in the throes of a new idea. He had all the symptoms, and as he knew that I had some remote connection with the War Department he came over and sat down by me and said, "What are your soldiers going to have to read?" I replied, "I have not the slightest idea." "Well," he said, "It is about time to begin to think of it." So I arranged to have him talk with Mr. Baker on the subject, and the interview

was most satisfactory to the Secretary of War, because he himself had I think an entirely new conception of what the training of citizen soldiers should be.

We all know that in the past, so long as soldiers were valiant and were reasonably disciplined in arms, it was looked on as rather unwise to inquire too curiously into their conduct in other respects. The phrase "brutal, licentious soldiery" was regarded as not inappropriate or derogatory. Of course, we also know the terrible cost in human lives and human suffering from that assumption that soldiers were naturally and inevitably disorderly and dissolute.

So, just at the time when Mr. Putnam's suggestion came to Mr. Baker, the War Department was considering how to build up a wholesome series of substitutes in the way of diversion and relaxation for the soldiers to take the place of the other

*Extemporaneous address.